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Two Dialogues

ON THE

MAN-TRADE.

Ἄνθρωπος ἀνθρώπου κύριος ἔκ ἐστι. Arr. Epict. cap. xxix.
Homo, Sacra Res. Sen. Epist. xcv.
— *Quocunque modo Rem.*



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DIALOGUE I.

S I R,



Ask your pardon. I am afraid I have made you wait.—No, Mr. Allcraft, I have been come but two or three minutes. — I should have been more exact to the time, but that I was detained by a friend, I met with in the street, as I was coming home. I do not remember, that ever I saw you, Mr. Philmore, upon 'Change, before to-day.—Why, as I am in no way of trade, or merchandize, I seldom go thither : and while I was there to-day, I talk'd what, I believe, is reckoned heresy there.—That you did, I can assure you. My friend, that I told you I met with, in the street, just now, came to me, and, with an earnestness very discoverable in his countenance, ask'd me, who and what that man

was, who, in company with me, talked at that strange rate, on the 'Change, to-day. He was the more offended, I believe, at what you said, as he had a considerable share in that Guinea ship, of which we were talking, and of which we had that account in the news to-day.—Pray what said he? He said, he was surprized to hear you say, that you were glad to hear that news, to hear that so many of your own country-men had lost their lives.—He misunderstood me, or wilfully misrepresented what I said. I was glad to hear, not that they lost their lives, (and you know, I said no such thing,) but that so many of those poor creatures, who were by unjust force held in captivity, in order to be sold for slaves for life, had recovered their liberty: and that was the only sense, that, in fair and candid construction, could be put on my words, when I said, *I was glad to hear that news.*—But you farther added, that the man-trade was a wicked trade.—I did Mr. Allcraft, and I shall now, according to my engagement to you, make it appear, that it is so. I understand you are pretty much concerned in this trade. I am Mr. Philmore, I confess: but to tell you the truth

truth, I have had, of late, some doubts and scruples, in my mind, about the lawfulness of it. And I now give you my word, that I will attend to what you have to say against this trade, with an unprejudiced mind, and, if you can make it appear, to my conviction, that it is unlawful, upon any principle of reason, that I will entirely drop it as soon as I can, and never have any concern in it again, as long as I live.—I am glad to hear you say so, my good friend. And I hope you will not take it amiss, if, to dissuade you from ever engaging in it hereafter, I set it in a true light, and expose it to the utmost degree, that reason and truth will justify; nor think me to be ill-natured, or censorious, in so doing.—Sir, I am sorry you should think there was any occasion for putting in this caution. If you can make it appear, to be a wicked practice, you will do well to expose it, I would not have you spare it in the least. And now I am ready to hear what you have to say upon the subject, and, if you please to proceed in one continued discourse, I will not, in the least, interrupt you. No. I don't chuse to do so. As there is no body here but we two, let us be more sociable.

I shall have occasion, now and then, perhaps, to ask you a question, and, if I should, I hope you will answer me.—I shall with pleasure.—Besides, you may not sometimes take my meaning, and if that should be the case, I would have you put me upon explaining myself, or if you should perceive any weakness, or fallacy, in my way of arguing, I would have you stop me immediately, and make me sensible of it.—Agreed. I'll take that liberty.—That is right. To begin then, I shall lay down a few preliminary propositions. And,

I. I would observe that the African blacks are, as properly and truly, men, as the European whites. They are both of the same species, and are originally descended from the same parents. Whether our first parents were blacks, or whites, I will not take upon me to say; for I do not think this is a point, that can be determined, with any certainty; nor indeed is it material. I remember I have some-where or other met with this definition of man, “a two leg’d animal, without feathers, and with broad nails,” but I never knew a white skin inserted,

ferted, as part of the definition of man. A rational animal is a good definition of man: and this takes in the black-skin'd as well as the white-skin'd. They have the same rational powers, as we have. They are free moral agents, as we are, and many of them have as good a natural genius, as good sense, and as brave a spirit, as any of those, to whom they are made slaves. To trade in the blacks then is to trade in men.

II. The black-skin'd and the white-skin'd, being all of the same species, all of the human race, are, by nature, upon an equality, one man in a state of nature, as we are with respect to the inhabitants of Guinea, and they with respect to us, is not superior to another man, nor has any authority or dominion over him, any right to lay his commands upon him. He that made us made them, and all of the same clay. We are all the workmanship of his hands, and he hath assign'd this globe to the human race, to dwell upon, he hath given this earth in common to the children of men. Some portion of it may indeed, in a state of nature, be made property, or be appropriated to the use, and
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be at the absolute disposal of one particular person, and one man may have more substance, or wealth, or he may have greater bodily strength, and greater sagacity, than another, and by these he may be able to bring that other entirely under his power, to deprive him of his liberty, and to take away his life, whenever he pleases : yet all these advantages do not give him, that is possessed of them any authority over his fellow-man, or right to command him. Notwithstanding all these, they are equally free, and independent one of another. God gave to man dominion over the *(a) fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing, that creepeth upon the earth ;* but not to any one man over another. Nor can one man, on any supposition whatever, become the property, or part of the goods or estate of another man, as his horse, or his dog is.

III. The European whites and the African blacks are all under the same *(b)* moral law,
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(a) Gen. i. 26.

(b) Si hoc natura præscribit, ut homo homini, quicunque sit consultum velit : necesse est secundum eandem naturam, omnium utilitatem esse communem. Quod si ita est, una continemur omnes et eadem lege naturæ : idque ipsum si ita est, certe violare alterum lege naturæ prohibemur. Verum autem primum verum igitur et extremum. Cic. de Offic. Lib. III.

the eternal law of reason, which God hath written upon the table of man's heart. We and they are members of one and the same great society, spread over the face of the whole earth, under one and the same supreme lawgiver, and judge; and are joined together, by the close and strong tie of human nature, common to us all; and it is this bond of humanity, that is the foundation of all other particular ties and connexions between men, and gives strength to them all. If I see an Englishman in distress, I pity him, and think myself obliged to relieve him, if I can, more as being a man, than as being born in the same country, or as being a member of the same civil society with myself, more as a citizen in the world, than as a citizen of England. A patriot, or a lover of his country, is a brave character, but a lover of mankind is a braver character. But I am going a little out of my way. We are all, as I was saying, under the same law of nature, or reason. What is morally good, or morally evil, justifiable, or unjustifiable, in a black man, is so in a white man, and vice versa. And, in their behaviour one towards another, their duty, or moral obligation is mutual. What might

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be justly reckoned an unrighteous, or cruel treatment of a white, would be altogether the same of a black, supposing both to be in the same circumstances. Unjustly to deprive a man of his property, is theft, or of his life, is murder, whatever colour he is of, and the murder of a man, that has a black skin, or black hair, is as great a sin, as that of a man, that has a white skin, or white hair.

IV. Our being christians does not give us any worldly superiority, or any authority whatever over those, who are not christians. Christ's kingdom is not of this world: neither doth christianity dissolve, or free us from the obligations of justice, equity, and benevolence towards our fellow-creatures, of the same species, be they Jews, Mahometans, or even black-skin'd heathens, which the law of nature lays us under. But, on the contrary, greatly strengthens them. The Jews, in our Saviour's time, understood that precept, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, in a very confin'd sense, as relating only to their own countrymen, and did not think themselves oblig'd in duty to show any acts of love and kindness to strangers, or any of the

the rest of mankind, and this is the account, which (c) Juvenal gives of them, in his time. But this precept, as adopted into the christian religion, takes in all mankind. By our neighbour we are to understand, every individual of the human species. We are commanded in the gospel *to render all their dues, to do unto others, as we would they should do to us, to be kind, merciful, and compassionate, to be ready to communicate, and to do good.* Which precepts, and many others to the same purpose, are not to be understood, in such a narrow sense, as if they related only to those, who are of the same religion with ourselves, or whose skin is of the same colour with ours, as is evident from other precepts of the gospel. We are commanded *to do good to all, especially to those, who are of the household of faith, to imitate our heavenly Father, who doeth good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works, yea, and to love our enemies.*

Before I proceed any farther, Mr. Allcraft, I should be glad to know, whether you have any objection against what I have now ob-

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serv'd.

(c) Non monstrare vias, eadem nisi sacra colenti: quæsitum ad fontem solos deducere verpos. Sat. XIV.

serv'd.—No really, Sir, if I had, I should have taken the liberty, immediately, to interrupt you. What you have hitherto advanc'd is so plain and evident, that I cannot see how any thing can be objected against it. These propositions might have been laid down as so many postulatus, which I believe nobody would have refused to grant.—Very true, Sir. But though they are so evident, that few will expressly deny, or dispute the truth of them; yet it is reasonable to suppose, that those, who are concerned in the man-trade, do not allow themselves to think on these truths impartially, seriously to consider them, and lay them to heart; but that, on the contrary, they have, some how or other, a kind of confused imagination, or half-formed thought, in their minds, that the blacks are hardly of the same species with the white men; but are creatures of a kind somewhat inferior. I say it is reasonable to suppose so; for I do not know how to think, that any white men could find in their hearts, that the common sentiments of humanity would permit them, to treat the black men, in that cruel barbarous manner, in which they do treat them, did they think
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and consider, that these have rational immortal souls, that they are made after the image of God, as well as themselves, and that, being in the same body, they have the same passions, senses, and feelings, as they have, and are as susceptible of pain, and grief, and upon the same occasions, as they are.—I am acquainted Mr. Philmore with several merchants, concerned in what you call the man-trade, who are men of good character and reputation, and respected as such, among their acquaintances.—It may be so. But what reputation they have, in the world, or what they are in themselves, what their true moral character is, it is not my business here to enquire. All I have to do, is to show, that the man-trade is a wicked trade. Neither the nature of moral good and evil, nor the truth of matters of fact can be said to depend on mens characters. You have acknowledged the truth of the observations, I now made.—I have, and shall never retract that acknowledgement, whatever use you may make of them, or whatever inferences you may draw from them.—I don't think, Mr. Allcraft, it requires much reasoning, or any long deductions, to show the wickedness

wickedness of the trade, we are speaking of : therefore I shall do little more, than lay before you the accounts, which we have of it in authors, and which I have heard (for I have made it my business to get all the information I could, about this affair) from the mouths of some sailors, who have gone several voyages to Guinea, of the manner in which it is carried on, how these poor creatures are brought into captivity, and how they are treated, after they have lost their liberty, making some reflections, as I go along, and when I have done so, I believe this whole affair will appear to be one continued scene of cruelty, and therefore one can hardly be too severe, in his animadversions upon it.

Now, it is well known, that, in those countries, whether our man-merchants send their ships yearly, to purchase slaves, kidnapping or man-stealing is frequently practised. It is there called pannyarring. There are several of the negroes, that live on the coast of Guinea, and near the river Gambia, in Negroland, who every year go a pannyarring. They take long journeys up into the inland parts,

parts, and seize upon those they meet with, straggling about the country, that they can master, if they be such as will serve their turn, and as many as they can well manage, men, women, and children, and bind them in strings, or fasten the ends of long poles to iron rings, which they put about their necks, and so lead them captives, laden very often with heavy burdens, hundreds of miles down to the sea coast, and there sell them, like cattle, or any other commodity, to the Europeans. And some of the petty kings, in that country, when a sloop arrives on the coast, or they expect one, will go and ransack one of their own towns, and seizing upon the inhabitants, carry them away by force, and sell them for such things as they want, or take a fancy to.—Sir, it cannot be denied, but that some of those whom our Guinea merchants purchase, on the coast, are stolen; but many others of them are taken prisoners in war, so that they have lost their liberty, and are captives, before they are purchased by those merchants.—That is true, Mr. Allcraft, but I cannot see that it is any thing to the purpose, or that it makes any difference; because that, you know, is the case of
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the stolen men, when they are sold, which consideration does not justify, nor in the least mitigate the wickedness and guilt of such merchandize. But I shall soon consider the case of those, who are prisoners of war, when they are sold, by itself.—Please to go on then, for I must own, that man-stealing is not lawful.—Not lawful! I think it is a most atrocious, detestible crime. To steal a horse, or to rob a man on the road of his money, is reckoned among us a capital crime, deserving of death, and is by law punishable with death. What then does he deserve, what punishment can be great enough for him, who steals a man, a crime, in comparison with which, horse-stealing or robbing on the highway is but a little trifling fault, quite excuseable, and venial. Man-stealers were by the (*d*) law of Moses punish'd with death, and in the New (*e*) Testament they are reckoned among the very worst of men. Can any thing be more cruel and barbarous, than to seize upon human creatures, and take them away by force, from their native country, from their friends and relations,

(*d*) Exod. xxi. 16.

(*e*) 1 Tim. i. 10.

relations, for ever, children from their tender parents, parents from their dear children, women from their beloved husbands, and husbands from their beloved wives, and drive them like hogs to market, there to be sold for slaves, for life? How great must be the misery those poor creatures are in, and the agonies of mind they feel, when they are thus carried off, so great, that, to relieve themselves, some of them have put an end to their own lives. And how grievous, how distressed must be the condition of their friends and relations, who are deprived of them, and shall never see their faces any more? It is horrid, it is shocking to think of such cruelty and barbarity. What monsters in nature then, destitute of all humanity and compassion, must they be, who are guilty of it. The black-men have the same natural affection for their kindred, and as strong, as we have. An instance of which, we have in a very moving story, in captain Snelgrave's account of Guinea. He tells you, that, while he was in Calabar, he saw a young male child, tied to a stake, and asking the reason, why it was so tied, he was told, it was to be sacrificed that night, to some God.

Moved it seems at the hearing of this, out of compassion he purchased the child, and the day before he had purchased it's mother, though that was what he knew not, when he purchased him; but on his coming on board, no sooner was the child handed into the ship, but the poor woman ran with great eagerness, and snatched him out of the arms of the white-man, that held him. And though he says, he thought there never was a more moving sight, than on this occasion, between the mother and her little son, yet this captain could find in his heart, after this, to carry off six hundred negroes, at once, in his ship, to the West-Indies. How many parents hearts must have ak'd then, for their children, and children's for their parents?

Besides. To sell, and buy human creatures, without their consent, yea and fore against their will, to trade in men, as you would in brute creatures, or any other commodities, is really impious, as well as cruel. Man is a noble creature, made but a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honour. He is the offspring of God: therefore thus to debase him, and to bring him
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down upon a level with the brutes, yea with things inanimate, is great impiety, it is an high affront offered to him, who is the kind and merciful Father of us all, who hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath united them all in one body, by the ties of nature. (*f*)

It is likewise an affront put upon mankind, upon the whole human race, which should raise a generous resentment and indignation in the breast of every one, that partakes of the human nature, and has any notion of the dignity of it, or any sense of humanity, which he should express and discover upon all proper occasions, and in all proper ways. —But Mr. Philmore, you would not charge our Guinea-merchants, here in England, with being man-stealers; for they bargain for the slaves, with them that bring them to market, and purchase them at the price agreed upon,

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(*f*) Qui autem civium rationem dicunt esse habendam, externorum negant: hi dirimunt communem humani generis societatem: qua sublata, beneficentia, liberalitas, bonitas, justitia funditus tollitur: quæ qui tollunt, etiam adversus Deos immortales impii judicandi sunt; ab iis enim constitutam inter homines societatem evertunt. Cic. de Offic. Lib. III.

between buyer and seller.—It is true. They do so; but do not you remember Mr. Allcraft the common saying, and a true saying it is, *that the receiver is as bad as the thief*, and that in the case we are speaking of, is very bad indeed. Nay I think the receiver in this case will appear to be worse, to be more guilty in some respects, than the bare thief, if we fairly consider the matter.

It is evident, that the Europeans in sending ships yearly to the coasts of Africa, to buy slaves, without enquiring how those, they purchase them of, came by them, do encourage those thieves, and tempt them to make a practice and trade of stealing their own countrymen; for this is the same thing in effect, as if they were to tell them in so many words, “ You get men ready for us, how you can, and we will take them off your hands.” Besides. Those men-merchants not only encourage others, in this cruel flagitious practice of man-stealing, but are really guilty of it themselves. You will observe that what is done by their command and according to their orders, I consider as done by themselves. As those poor miserable creatures were
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stolen, those, who did steal them, could not convey any right in them, to others, though these others should give ever so much in purchase of them, any more, than if they had them for nothing. For those purchasers then to deprive them of their liberty, and by force keep them in their possession, in whom they have no right (supposing one man could be the property of another) and who never injur'd them in the least, nor forfeited their liberty, to keep them in bonds, and carry them away captives, is properly speaking man-stealing. And what aggravates this crime in the European man-merchants, and renders it much more heinous in them, than in the Africans, is that the former enjoy the light of the gospel, and profess themselves to be christians.—Pray give me leave Mr. Philmore, to ask you one question.—Sir, with all my heart. What is it?—You know, when we speak of a thing being stolen, there must be two parties concerned in the affair, the person, who stole, and the person, from whom it was stolen. Now suppose a man, who is at liberty, and master of himself, should be stolen, from whom can he be said to be stolen?—Really Mr. Allcraft, that is
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not an improper question, and in answer to it, I think he may be said to be stolen from God. Man-stealing is a kind, and indeed the worst kind of sacrilege, which consideration farther shows the impiety of it. Man is sacred, and is by nature devoted to the service of God, to whose authority alone he is obliged to yield an absolute, unlimited obedience: for one man therefore to assault another, and by meer force to make a captive of him, not for any crime, that he has been guilty of, but to make a penny of him, considering him as part of his possessions or goods, with which he can do what he pleases, is robbing of God, which is sacrilege. Again. In answer to your question, he may be said to be stolen from himself, being no longer master of himself, or at his own disposal. He is deprived of his liberty, and consequently (according to Mr. Lock's (g) observation) of all means of self-preservation. He is lost to himself, and by unjust force and violence is brought into the possession of another at whose mercy his life is.—Sir, you have satisfactorily answered my question. Let us now, if you please, consider the other case

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(g) On civil government.

I mentioned, and see how that, upon a fair examination, will turn out. I mean of those, who being taken prisoners in war, are sold into slavery for life.—That was what I was just going to take notice of, and I believe the guilt and wickedness of the man-trade, in this case, will be found to be, at least, as great as in the former.

It is very common in the countries, where the Europeans carry on this trade, for the petty kings and princes, of which there are a great many, to go to war with their neighbours, not in defence of their right, not to get satisfaction for any injuries, done them, or to repair any damages they have unjustly suffered, by those neighbours, but purely to get prisoners, against the time the ships from Europe arrive upon their coast, that with them they may be able to purchase of the captains of those ships, the goods they have on board.

Now here the injury and crime is the same in kind, as in the former case, and indeed greater in the kind. In both cases it is stealing man, but in the latter, it is attended with
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shedding of blood, with slaughter and destruction, which consideration doth aggravate the crime of our Guinea-merchants, who purchase those prisoners. Christ hath said (*b*) that “Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God.” But how contrary to what our Saviour recommends, the making of peace among men, is the spirit and practice of those, who, for lucre-sake, provoke and encourage others to go to war with their neighbours, and by unjust force to kill and destroy some, and others of them to make prisoners.

Moreover. Those merchants not only tempt others to kill and steal men, but are guilty of great injustice and cruelty in detaining those poor wretches in captivity, and selling them into slavery for life: for as was observ’d before, they can have no right in them, if those, of whom they purchased them, had not any, as they certainly had not; for those, who are engag’d in an unjust war, can have no right to any captures they make, in that war. Conquest cannot be said to give the conqueror a right to any thing, which he had
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(*b*) Matth. v. 9.

no right to before the conquest, any more than a highwayman can be said, to have a right to the money he has stolen from a traveller, after he has once put it into his pocket, and carried it off.—Sir, I own the case may be, and I have been told that sometimes it is, as you have now represented it; but it is not always so. You make the most unfavourable supposition, that those, who bring the prisoners to be sold, were engag'd in an unjust war, and therefore (which consequence indeed I allow) that they were as truly guilty of man-stealing, in taking them prisoners, as those, who go about the country to pick up single persons, and carry them off. But let us now suppose, that the other side was in the wrong, that the prisoners, which are bought, were engag'd in an unjust war, that they were the first invaders or aggressors. You must allow, I think, when this is the case, as it sometimes is, that the captors have a right to dispose of the captives, in order to make good the damages they suffered, and repair the injuries that were done them, and consequently that it is not unlawful for others to purchase those captives.—I do not deny, Mr. Allcraft, but that sometimes it may be

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so in fact, as you say; but, I think, I can make it appear, that, even in this case, the man-trade is not justifiable.

To this purpose then I would observe, that the captains of the ships, that are sent out upon this trade, cannot come to the knowledge of the true state of the case between the captors and the captives, which party was in the right, and which in the wrong, in the war, in which they were engag'd; for to be able to judge of this, they must hear both sides, and have the whole affair in dispute laid before them, which I believe is hardly ever done, or indeed that they ever so much as enquire into the affair, or ask any questions about it, though this is what they should be satisfied in, to justify their purchasing of those prisoners, supposing the captors had a right to sell them, which I shall show they had not, even though they, the captors, were engaged in a just war.—But first, give me leave, Mr. Philmore, to put another case. Suppose I were to go to Smithfield, to buy a horse, would it be a crime in me, think you, to buy one unless I were first sure, that the man I bought it of had not stolen it.—No. But then the case
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you put is not a case in point, or to the purpose, unless it be likewise supposed, that you knew, that the greatest part of the horses brought to Smithfield market, were usually stolen horses, as it is well known that the greater part of those, who are sold for slaves in Africa, are stolen men, as in the two cases we have already considered, and, on this supposition, I think it would be a crime, for notwithstanding I may justify my purchasing any goods, though I be not sure that the person I buy them of has a right to them, that they are his own just property, yet I could not justify my buying of them, if I had more reason to think that he stole them, than that he came honestly by them, but might be justly reckoned in this case, to be a receiver of stolen goods.—Whether the European captains do or do not know how those, they buy the slaves of, came by them, is not very material, if you can make it appear, as you say you think you can, that the slave-trade is not justifiable, in the case I last mentioned.—Well then, this is what I shall now endeavour to do.

You know, when one king or prince goes

to war with another, the common men are not capable of judging of the merits of the cause, which party has or has not right of their side. But laying aside this consideration, they are forced to go whithersoever their king or captain leads them. They are oblig'd to obey his commands, and to desert would be death to them : therefore I think it would be unjust and cruel, in him who comes off conqueror, though he had right of his side, and was engaged in a just war, to deprive those common men, who are taken prisoners, of their liberty, after the war is over, or at any time to sell them for slaves for life, either by way of punishment, or retribution, unless they be supposed to be answerable for whatever damage or injury is done by their king, or that they are his goods or property, both which are absurd, and the latter a supposition unworthy of human nature, and shocking to the human mind ; consequently the buying of them for such must be altogether as criminal, in the Europeans.

It is reckoned we have now in this kingdom thirty thousand French prisoners, or more, and we say that in the war, we are
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carrying on against France, we have right on our side, that we entered into it for the recovery and defence of our territories invaded by them ; but though it be true as I believe it is, that our cause is good, yet would it not be cruel and inhuman in us, to sell these prisoners into slavery for life, and in any other nation, as the Spaniards for instance, to buy them of us, in order to send them to work in their mines, in Peru, as long as they live, and would not all the other nations of Europe exclaim against us and the Spaniards, as inhuman barbarous people, for so doing.—No doubt but they would Mr. Philmore ; because such a thing would be contrary to custom, and to the law of nations in Europe, whereas in Guinea, and Negroland, it is a common custom, to sell for slaves the prisoners they take in war, there they make a trade of it.—I own, Sir, that may be one reason, among others, why such a thing practised in those countries is not looked upon, by us here, with so much abhorrence and detestation, as it would be if it were to be practised in Europe. But this makes no difference, as to the nature of the thing in itself ; for as I have shown before, the man-trade in this last
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mentioned case, wherein the men, who are sold, are supposed to be prisoners, that were engaged in an unjust war, is in itself wicked and inhuman, contrary to the law of nature, the obligations of which are eternal and unchangeable, not to be alter'd or disannull'd by use or custom, be it ever so ancient or universal. They are the same all over the world, the same in Guinea or Jamaica, as in England.—There is one case more Mr. Philmore, which you have not yet considered. I mean that of capital criminals, who are sold into slavery for life, in punishment of their crimes.—I did design to take notice of this case. And I must confess that, if the man-trade be allowable in any case, it is so in this. If a man, who, by committing some capital crime, hath forfeited his life, be not put to death, he may I think be depriv'd of his liberty, and be made a slave for life, and that without any injustice done him; for if he should think this a greater punishment than death, if he should chuse to die, rather than live all his days in that miserable state of slavery, it would be in his own power to deliver himself out of that state, by putting an end to his life. Whether he could lawfully do it

it, in this case, I will not say ; but in some cases, I think a *felo de se* may be justified, such as that of the man, who not long since made an attempt upon the life of the king of France ; and it is well known that the treatment of the slaves, in our plantations is very severe and terrible, of which I shall take notice, before we dismiss this subject. But the Europeans cannot justify their purchasing of those, we are now speaking of, to sell them again for slaves for life, unless they be first sure, that they of whom they buy them may lawfully sell them ; but this is what, I believe, they seldom, or never trouble their heads about. However that be, the man-trade is, upon the whole, a wicked trade ; because there are but few, in comparison with the rest, who are bought and sold for slaves, that are capital criminals. Can you now think, Mr. Allcraft, of any other case, wherein any thing plausible can be offered, in justification of the man-trade?—I have been informed, that in those parts of Africa, where the slave-trade is carried on, there are some fathers, that sell their children, and husbands their wives. But, if this trade in the cases you have considered, cannot be justified,

justified, much less can it be justified in this case.—Very right. And as you think so, we shall take no farther notice of it. But I have somewhere read, I think it was in the Gazetteer, that the Europeans do sometimes seize upon whole families of negroes, on the coast, and carry them off to our plantations, and there sell them for slaves. Why it is almost nine o'clock. I did not think it had been so late.—Will you then defer the farther account of this affair to another time.—We must defer it Mr. Allcraft, and if you will favour me with your company, we will meet to-morrow evening, about the same time we met now, at my house, and then proceed in it.—Sir, I will wait on you. But I should be glad, if you would stay now and take a bit of supper with us.—I thank you, Sir; but I cannot conveniently stay any longer at present, I wish you a good night.—Good night to you, Sir, I thank you for your good company.

DIALOGUE



D I A L O G U E II.

* * * * * P * * * * * PLEASE to walk into that room,
 Mr. Allcraft.—What large folio is
 that on your desk?—It is the second
 volume of the compleat system of geography.
 —I suppose you have some account there
 of the negroes, and the slave-trade.—Yes,
 Sir, and that is what I have been now read-
 ing.—Then you have been preparing your-
 self, Mr. Philmore.—I shall have occasion, I
 believe, to turn to some passages in it, before
 we part, relating to the subject of our con-
 versation yesterday.—I assure you, that is
 what has employed most of my thoughts,
 ever since, and if you please, we will now
 go on with it, as we proposed.—Well. Where
 did we leave off?—Why you have considered
 the several cases, wherein the slave-trade is
 carried on, or the several ways and methods,
 by which the Africans come by the slaves,
 which they sell to the Europeans; and have
 E endeavoured

endeavoured to show, that, in every particular case, and upon the whole, it is a wicked trade.—Let us go on then Mr. Allcraft, with this account, though it be a dismal story.

The captain of the Guinea-man, when he has finished his marketing, when he has bought as many reasonable creatures, as he wants, and is full freighted, having on board, we will say, two hundred of them, coupled in irons, and closely crammed up in a ship, of about a hundred tons burden, he sets out for one of our plantations, in the West-Indies, or in North America, or of those belonging to the Spaniards, and may be two or three months on the voyage, during which time, these negroes fare very hard, living upon beans, salt fish, or yams, and, from the filth and stench, that must be among them, occasioned by their being put down under deck, and penn'd together in so little room, they must be in danger of being infected, by the putrified air they breath in, and of having some distemper breaking out among them, to prevent which, they are brought up upon deck, to have some fresh air, a certain number of them at a time, by turns, for some hours, every day: but notwithstanding all
the

the care, that is taken in airing them, it often happens, that a distemper does break out among them, and carries off a great many, a fifth, or fourth, yea sometimes a third part of them, and it is reasonable to suppose, that some of them have their hearts broke, and die with grief and anguish, to think that they shall never more set foot on their native soil, and that the eye that hath seen them shall see them no more. I remember, I read an account in one of the news-papers last year, of a ship belonging to Liverpool, that had a hundred and ninety slaves on board, eighty of whom died on the voyage, which is more than two fifths.—I remember that account too, but that was something extraordinary, and as such it was put into the news-papers.—It may be so: but taking all the slaves together, that are brought on board our ships yearly, from the coast of Africa, where they are bought, by our Guinea-merchants, I think one may venture to affirm, that, at least, a tenth part of them die upon the voyage. Now, Mr. Allcraft, do not you think, that their being put on board, bound and confined and dieted as they are, is the cause or occasion of the death of so many? How do you know, but that as many of

them might have died in the time, had they been left in their own country, and at their liberty?—That is possible indeed; but it is very unlikely, that half so many of them would have died, in two or three months, especially considering that the captains take what care they can, to buy none but such as are healthy and sound, and no old men. But supposing it were likely, that as many, yea and the very same persons would have died, had they been left in their own country, one by one accident, or distemper, and another by another, yet I cannot see what may be inferr'd from hence, unless it be this, that, if they had, our man-traders would not have been guilty of their deaths, but as the case stands, as the matter of fact is, this consideration does not in the least excuse them. They are certainly chargeable with taking away the lives of as many of those poor creatures, as come by their death, by being so confined and treated, and are guilty of murder: for to take away a man's life unjustly, is murder, whether it be done in two or three minutes, or two or three months, that makes no difference.—How can any one, Mr. Philmore, be charged with the murder of another person, whose life he never designed to take
away,

away, as it is certain, that neither the captains, nor any of the crews of the Guinea-ships have any design upon the lives of those, who die upon the voyage. Nay, it is reasonable to suppose, that they would have been glad, if they had lived, till they had been disposed of; for by the death of every one of them, the merchant is a looser of so much, in money or goods, as he would have yielded in the market, if he had lived to be sold.—Sir, I do not think it necessary, in order to convict a man of murder, to make it appear, that he had an intention to commit murder. Whoever does, by unjust force and violence, deprive another of his liberty, and, while he has him in his power, reduces him to such a condition, and gives him such treatment, as evidently endangers his life, and in the event do actually deprive him of his life, is guilty of murder.—This is a heavy charge.—It is so, Mr. Allcraft, but I will maintain it to be a just one. Suppose (to put another case, which I think is parallel to that we are now considering, so far at least, as I mean to apply it) suppose, I say, two or three ruffians should seize upon a man going home at night, in one of our streets, and carry him away by force, and put him down into a
dark

dark hole or dungeon, with a design to sell him for a slave, and he, being confined there for two months, living all that time upon bread and water, and lying upon straw, should die at the end of the two months, though a middle aged man, and, when he was first deprived of his liberty, in a good state of health, and likely to live many years: and suppose farther, that this fact should be known, that the persons, by whom it was committed, should be apprehended, and brought to their trial, in any court of judicature, in England, and the fact should be proved upon them, by a strong and full evidence, would it avail them any thing, to plead in court, that the man might have died in that time, or sooner, if they had not meddled with him, or that they had no design to take away his life, but that they would have been glad, if he had lived? No certainly. Nor would any jury, I believe, notwithstanding such pleas, hesitate to bring them in guilty of murder, nor any judge, to pass sentence of death upon them, as murderers, *(i)* and

(i) Non avaritia, non crudelitas modum novit: et ista, quamdiu furtim, et a singulis fiunt, minus noxia, minusque monstrosa sunt: ex senatus consultis plebisque scitis scelera exercentur, et publice jubentur, vetita privatim. Quæ clam commissa

and every one would acknowledge the sentence to be just, and would be sorry to hear, that, after they were condemned, they had broke out of prison, and escaped the punishment they had deserved, for being guilty of such barbarity. Now I do not see any difference in these two cases, that should make the charge of murder to be just in the one, but not in the other. If you do, I desire you would mention it.—Be pleased, Sir, to proceed in your account.—Well then, let us now suppose the Guinea-ship to be arrived at one of our colonies, in America, or the West-Indies, where the poor wretches, men, women, and children, with which she is freighted, are exposed to sale, and disposed of a second time. You own, Mr. Allcraft, you are pretty much concerned in the Guinea-trade. Pray, how many Africans, do you think, are purchased yearly, taking one year with another, by our English merchants trading to Africa.—That is what I can only guess at.—They may be about thirty-five thousand a year, upon an average. I should have guessed them at more, from what I have read, since I saw you yesterday on the
'Change,

commissa capite luerent, eadem quia paludati fecere laudamus.
 Sen. Epist. 95.

'Change, in this second volume of the geographical system, and in Snelgrave's account of Guinea. The passage, I refer to in the former, is in the account of Barbadoes; and, if you please, I will read it to you.—Pray do.—Here I have it, “ Here it is fit to mention, “ that in the year 1728, upon a parliamentary “ enquiry into the African trade, it appeared, “ that, in three years only, the number of “ negroes imported at Barbadoes, Jamaica, “ and Antigua, amounted to forty two thousand, besides what were carried to St. “ Christopher's, Nevis and Montserrat.” And Snelgrave, in his account, tells us, that, “ In “ the year 1726, it was proved, before the “ commissioners of trade, that there had “ been to the coast of Guinea, the year before, above two hundred sail.” Now, Mr. Allcraft, how many slaves, do you think, those ships might carry one with another.—About two hundred and fifty, I believe.—Multiply then two hundred, by two hundred and fifty, and the product, which is fifty thousand, gives you the number of slaves, which were imported in the year 1725. And do not you think, that the man-trade, among the English, is increased since that time? —I really question, Mr. Philmore, whether

whether we have, for some years past, sent two hundred ships, in one year, to Guinea. —We will suppose then, that the number of negroes purchased by our Guinea-merchants, one year with another, are no more than what you have set them at, thirty-five thousand. Now, in the account, we have here in this book of the negroes, in our plantations, it is said, that, in the island of Jamaica, almost half of the new imported negroes die in the seasoning, and that, in Barbadoes, it is reckoned, that a fourth part die in seasoning; and, according to the same account, there are twice as many imported into these two islands, as into all our other islands, in the West-Indies, and all our colonies in North America. At a moderate computation therefore, it may be reckoned, that of all those, who are purchased by our African merchants, in a year, twelve thousand die upon the voyage, and in the seasoning.

What a sad dreadful affair then is this man-trade, whereby so many thousands of our fellow rational creatures loose their lives, are, truly and properly speaking, *murdered* every year? I do not think there is an instance

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of

of so great barbarity and cruelty carried on in any part of the world, as is this, year after year. It is enough to make one tremble, to think what a load of guilt lies upon this nation, on this account, and that the blood of thousands of poor innocent creatures, murdered every year, in carrying on this cursed trade, cry aloud to heaven for vengeance. Were we to hear or read of any other nation in the world, that did destroy, every year, in some other way, or in some other account, as many human creatures, as are destroyed by this trade, we should look upon them as a very bloody, cruel, barbarous people. We, to this day, exclaim against the cruelty of the Spaniards, in destroying so many of the inhabitants of Mexico and Peru, when they unjustly invaded those countries, though it is a question, whether the English have not destroyed as many of the inhabitants of Africa, since the commencement of this villainous man-trade, among us, and of our popish Queen Mary, whose reign is looked upon, as the most cruel and inhuman of any, in all the English history, though there were not above three hundred burnt, for heresy, in the five years of her reign, and you know, that the papists believe, or profess

fess to believe, that they ought to put heretics to death, at least, they did then. Whereas the English have, for many years past, put to death ten or twelve thousand a year, in carrying on this trade, which they still continue, for the sake of getting money, and furnishing themselves with the superfluities of life, which shows a greater degree of barbarity, and many of those poor wretches have endured more pain, before they died, than those heretics did, in being burnt.—They believe so! but can any thing be more absurd, than to believe, or maintain, that any man ought, or that it is lawful for him, to take away the life of another, because that other does not think as he does?—To be sure, Mr. Allcraft, it is highly absurd, but not more so, than to assert, that the man-trade carried on, by our Guinea-merchants, is a lawful trade. And give me leave to observe here by the way, that there is nothing, that shows the degeneracy of mankind more, that casts a greater blemish on human nature, or exposes it in a more disadvantageous light, than this consideration, that whole nations, christian as well as heathen, profess to believe the greatest absurdities and contradictions, and justify the most wicked and

villainous practices. (*k*)—But, Mr. Philmore, you charge the English with putting so many to death. Pray, how far do you extend this charge of murder, whom do you include under it?—Why, all, that are concerned in carrying on the man trade, are accomplices in it, and all, that encourage this trade, are accessory to it.—Then the blame or guilt of / it does in some measure lie upon the government, upon the whole legislature of England; for it is well known, that they have encouraged, and still do encourage this trade. There was a company, you know, established by the government, to carry on this trade, exclusively of all others, and since it has been laid open, the parliament has granted money, for several years, for the maintenance of some forts, for protecting the negro-trade. Now to lay the blame, in any measure, of such barbarity, upon the government, is a bold charge.—It is so, and how came you, Mr. Allcraft, to be so bold.—Nay, I only inferr'd it from what you now said.—Why you did not hear me mention a word about the government.—True, Mr. Philmore, but the inference I made is so plain
and

(*k*) *Defendit numerus, junctæque umbone phalanges.* Juv. Sat. II.

and obvious, that hardly any one, who had heard what you said, could have help'd making it.—What I have asserted, I think I can defend, and if the inference, you draw from it, is just, I cannot help that, nor all the people in the world. No legislature on earth, which is the supreme power in every civil society, can alter the nature of things, or make that to be lawful, which is contrary to the law of God, the supreme legislator and governour of the world. Mischief may be framed and established by a law, but if it be, it is mischief still, as much so, as it was before it was established, though it's being so may make men insensible of their guilt, or bold and fearless in the perpetration of it; for too many, among christians, are, contrary to Christ's exhortation, more influenc'd by the fear of man, than by the fear of God.—You talk seriously now, Mr. Philmore.—Why it is really a serious subject, and I own it raises a serious concern in my mind, that such barbarity should be suffered in christian nations. (1)

Is

(1) *Persuasum habeo, usurpatum illud jus domini in servos, tanquam in pecora, quale apud antiquos obtinuit, et quale etiamnum hodie, licet christianis inter se, et in plerisque Europæis regionibus simpliciter explosum, in aliis tamen mundi plagis, et majore forsan quam apud veteres ethnicos, tyrannide, a quibusdam Christi nomen ferentibus, ingenti sacro sancti illius*

Is it not enough to make a man's heart ake, unless he has lost all love and regard to his kind, to think that so many thousands of the human race should be sacrificed, every year, to that greedy voracious God mammon !

Nor is it less shocking to hear, or read the accounts we have of the barbarous treatment (which is the next thing we are to take notice of) that those black men, who stand and survive the seasoning, as it is called, meet with, from, the white men, in our plantations, though the writers of this geographical system do not seem to disapprove of the man-trade, yet, according to their account, the treatment of those poor creatures is inhuman and unmerciful. It is not very long, if you please, I will read it to you.—Pray do.—In the account of the island of Nevis, we have the following passage, “ They are
 “ fed generally with salt herrings, maize, and
 “ Spanish potatoes. *** During corn-time,
 “ they work night and day, almost incessantly ; and on Sundays, they bring to the
 “ market Indian corn, yams, garden stuff of
 “ all sorts, &c. A negro cannot be evidence
 “ against

illius nominis probro, exercetur, esse, ut Cl. Titii hic verbis utar, emortuæ socialitatis certissimum indicium. Carmich. in Puffend. Lib. II. Cap. IV.

“ against a white man. If he strikes one,
 “ the law condemns him to loose the hand
 “ he strikes with ; and if he should happen
 “ to draw his blood, he must die for it. If
 “ a white man kill a black, he is not tried
 “ for his life, but the law obliges him to pay
 “ thirty pounds (*m*) Nevis money to his
 “ master, for the loss of his slave.” I will
 now turn to Barbadoes. Here we are told
 that, “ As for any thing else regarding the
 “ masters, servants and slaves, what has been
 “ said upon this head, in Jamaica, may serve
 “ as well for this island ; their work and man-
 “ ner of living in both being much the same ;
 “ though there is greater plenty of provisions
 “ in Jamaica.” Let us now then see, how
 it is in Jamaica. Here we have the following
 account. “ The owners of the negro-slaves
 “ set aside for each a small parcel of ground,
 “ and allow them Sundays to manure it.
 “ They generally plant therein maize, Gui-
 “ nea-corn, plaintains, yams, cocoas, pota-
 “ toes, &c. This is the food by which most
 “ of them are supported ; but some of them,
 “ who

(*m*) What colour of excuse can there be for the contempt,
 with which we treat this part of our species ; that we should
 not put them upon the common foot of humanity, that we
 should only set an insignificant fine upon the man that mur-
 ders them. Spect. No. 215.

“ who are most industrious, raise a stock of
 “ fowls, which they carry to market on the
 “ Sundays, (which is their only leisure day
 “ in Jamaica,) and therewith purchase salt,
 “ beef, fish, or pork, to make their oglios
 “ or pepper-pots. These poor creatures are
 “ reduced to such hardships, that it is com-
 “ mon to see them at twelve o’clock at noon,
 “ when they turn in from work, till two,
 “ scraping the dunghills at gentlemens doors
 “ for bones, which they break very small,
 “ boil them and eat the broth. When these
 “ slaves are first brought hither, as they
 “ generally are from the Guinea coast, they
 “ are very simple, innocent creatures, but
 “ soon turn roguish, and when they come
 “ to be whipp’d, urge the example of the
 “ whites for their excuse.” And of their
 punishments we have the following shocking
 account. “ The punishments of the negroes,
 “ in this and the other islands, are not less
 “ severe, than they are in the colonies on the
 “ continent. Sir Hans Sloan says, in his
 “ history of this island, that a rebellious negro,
 “ or he that twice strikes a white man, is
 “ condemned to the flames: being chained
 “ flat on his belly, at the place of execution,
 “ and his arms and legs extended, fire is then
 set

“set to his feet, and he is burnt gradually up
 “to his head. They starve others to death,
 “with a loaf hanging before their mouths, so
 “that some gnaw the very flesh off their own
 “shoulders, and expire with all the frightful
 “agonies, expressing the most horrid tor-
 “tures. For crimes of a less nature, they
 “geld the offender, and chop off half of his
 “foot with an ax; for negligence only, they
 “whip him till his back is raw, and then
 “scatter pepper and salt on his wounds, to
 “heighten the smart; and some planters
 “will drop melted wax on their skins, which
 “puts them to intolerable pain.” Now must
 not the human nature in those people be
 changed into the devilish, who can put those
 poor creatures to such torments?—You are
 not to suppose, Sir, that all the planters do in-
 flict such severe cruel punishments on their
 slaves.—I do not, Mr. Allcraft.—You are to
 consider too, that, as the blacks are more in
 number (two or three to one in some of our
 plantations) than the white men, and are
 most of them sullen and stubborn, and have
 often mutinied and made insurrections, the
 white men think they had need exercise
 greater severities upon them, than otherwise
 they would do, to keep them in awe, and

prevent their rising.—What you say, or something like it, is, I know, frequently offered in excuse of the barbarous treatment of the Africans, in our colonies, as it is observed in the words immediately following what I last read. “Some excuse these fe-
 “verities by telling us, that the blacks, being
 “so perverse, sullen, and mischievous a gene-
 “ration, as it must be confess’d they are, de-
 “serve such treatment, and that milder usage
 “would not reclaim them.” It is no wonder they are sullen. Would not white men be so, were they in their condition, and treated as they are? No doubt but they would. But the blacks, I warrant you, though they be unjustly deprived of their liberty, banished from their native country, from all their friends and relations, and made captives and slaves for life, though they are treated worse than dogs, and made to work harder than horses, yet they ought to be pleasant, good-humoured, and obliging to them that do thus treat them; and, if they be not, they should be put to pain and torment. And they are, it seems, *a mischievous generation*, apt to mutiny and rebel, that is, in truth, they want to recover their liberty, and would attempt to do it, if they were not kept in awe, by hard
 usage

usage and severe discipline, according to what is observed in the account of Barbadoes, to which I will now turn. Here we are told that the masters of the negroes, "are obliged "to treat them very severely, not only because of the stubborn, treacherous temper, "which is so peculiar to all of their complexion and country, but because they are "three times the number of the whites in "this island, and have made frequent attempts to get the mastery," that is their liberty, or to deliver themselves out of the miserable slavery they are in. Which attempts are in another place called cunning and hellish plots. There is no danger in slander-ing these poor wretches. As there are none to vindicate them, or to plead their cause, one may venture to tell any lies of them, and represent them as devils, if it were only for their *complexion*, as being black; but I do not think this a good syllogism, the devil is black. The Africans are black. Therefore the Africans are devils. If it be, one might easily prove white men to be devils too. There is another thing, which I cannot help taking notice of here, and that is the contradiction between the character, which is given of the negroes, in the passage I now read,

and that in the words I read before : in this it is said, that “ a stubborn treacherous temper is peculiar to all of their complexion “ and country,” whereas, in the other, we are told that “ when they are first brought to “ our plantations, it is observed they are very “ simple, innocent creatures, but soon turn “ roguish.” But how come they to be *three times the number of the whites in this island*? Is it not owing to the white inhabitants, to their purchasing them, and keeping them in bondage? How weak then is this excuse? Where is the sense of assigning this majority, which is of their own procuring, as a reason for their treating the blacks with such severity? I will turn but to one place more, where we have an account of those plots laid by the blacks in Antigua, but which was discovered by the whites, before it could be brought to bear, and of the horrid executions, which followed upon the discovery of it. Here it is; “ the king” that is, who was to have been king of the blacks, had the plot succeeded, “ and his two generals, with two “ others were all broke on the wheel. Four “ more of the principal conspirators were “ burnt the same day; as were seven on the “ next day. Six were hung alive in chains “ on

“ on gibbets, and starved to death ; after
 “ which their heads were cut off, and their
 “ bodies burnt ; and fifty eight others were,
 “ at several times, chained to stakes and
 “ burnt alive.” Now was not this a lamentable affair (and there have been several instances of such cruelty in our plantations) that so many poor innocent creatures should be put to the greatest tortures, and be made to suffer the most painful deaths. Some of the French prisoners in England, whose condition is far preferable to that of most of the slaves in our colonies, have attempted to break out of prison, but, being discovered in time, failed in their attempt. Now should not we have been reckoned by all the world a cruel barbarous people, if the government had ordered some of them to be broke on the wheel, some to be burnt alive, and others to be starved to death, though the French are our enemies, and are engaged in an unjust war against us ; whereas those slaves had never done any hurt or injury to those, who tortured them to death.—But they designed to hurt them, and therefore how can you consider them as innocent, Mr. Philmore ? Don’t you think that in prosecuting and carrying their scheme into execution, they
would

would have destroyed the white men, if they had not been discovered timely enough to prevent it.—They might perhaps, and if they had, they could have justified the destroying of them, upon the foot of reason, and by the law of nature, if they could not otherwise have recovered and secured their liberty, to which they had a right: and so all the black men now in our plantations, who are by unjust force deprived of their liberty, and held in slavery, as they have none upon earth to appeal to, may lawfully repel that force with force, and to recover their liberty, destroy their oppressors: and not only so, but it is the duty of others, white as well as black, to assist those miserable creatures, if they can, in their attempts to deliver themselves out of slavery, and to rescue them out of the hands of their cruel tyrants.—But Mr. Philmore, that is what our laws will not admit of, wherein, as I apprehend, those slaves are considered as the property of their masters, and the rescuing of them or carrying them off as theft or robbery.—If so, I am sure they are unrighteous laws, as they are made not in defence of innocence, but in defence, and for the encouragement of injustice, oppression, and cruelty, and are contrary to
the

the law of nature, the law of him, before whose tribunal the governours of this world, as well as the governed must appear, in the great day of account : for by this law we are (*n*) obliged to relieve the distressed, and to defend or rescue the injured and oppressed, when and so far as it lies in our power. The doing of which must afford a man of a benevolent and merciful disposition of mind, the greatest pleasure in the world. Besides, to consider those black men under that notion is a degrading of human nature, and is a very wrong notion, according to what has been before observed.—Suppose then a ship belonging to any other nation should see one of our ships on the coast of Guinea, full freighted with slaves, ready to sail, and coming up to her should insist upon their being all set at liberty, without any ransom, and, upon their demand not being complied with, should make an attack upon the English ship, and, getting the mastery of her, should unbind the slaves, and turn them ashore

(*n*) *Injustitiæ duo genera sunt : unum eorum qui inferunt, alterum eorum, qui ab iis, quibus infertur, si possunt, non propulsant injuriam : nam qui injuste in quempiam impetum facit, *** is quasi violenter manus videtur afferre socio. Qui autem non defendit, nec obsistit, si potest, injuriæ, tam est in vitio, quam si parentes, aut patriam, aut socios deferat. Cic. de Off. Lib. I.*

ashore loose, to go whithersoever they list. According to your way of thinking, Mr. Philmore, this would be not only a justifiable, but likewise a good deed, a brave action. Or suppose (which indeed is not likely ever to be the case) that any nation in the world, not concerned in the Guinea-trade, should insist upon all the blacks now in our plantations, who may be about three hundred thousand, being set at liberty, and that upon a refusal, they should go to war with the English, and use all their power and strength to rescue those slaves, or assist them in recovering their liberty, according to you, that nation would have right on their side, and would be engaged in a just, yea in a commendable war, in a noble glorious cause, the aid and relief of so many thousands of poor, injured, oppressed creatures.—They would be so, Mr. Allcraft, as, in that case, we might justly be considered as the aggressors; for in truth we are now at war (we Englishmen, we christians, to our shame be it spoken) and have been for above a hundred years past, without any cessation at all, at war and enmity with our own species, not with this or that particular nation, but with mankind in general, and in this war we have destroyed every
year,

year, at least for some years past, near as many of the human race, who never did us any injury, as have been destroyed in the same time, by the war now carried on in Europe. —Alas Sir! what then must be the character of the English nation at this day? We reckon ourselves to be a brave, generous, humane, civilized people.—We do so; but do you think that this is a true character, while that barbarous, savage man-trade, in the carrying on of which twelve, if not fifteen thousand lives are sacrificed every year, is not only winked at, but countenanced and encouraged among us? I have indeed heard some, not only Guinea-merchants, but others, argue and plead as well as they could, but that was very weakly, in defence of this trade, carried on by the English.—You know there are other nations in Europe besides ours concerned in this trade.—That does not lessen the guilt in our people, though it may keep them in countenance: but the English are now more concerned, I believe, than all the other nations in Europe taken together, in this abominable trade, which is the greatest scandal and reproach that lies upon this nation; the removing of which, by proclaiming liberty to those captives now in our

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plantations,

plantations, making them freemen, and prohibiting for ever, upon the severest penalties, the man-trade throughout all his majesty's dominions, and thereby leading the way, and giving a good example to the other nations in Europe, concerned in the man-trade, would be much to the honour of our government, and I am sure would give great pleasure to all, who are lovers of mankind, and have a regard for the honour, safety, and prosperity of their country.—But is it probable, think you, that those other nations would follow such an example? Is it not more likely that, if the English were to drop this trade entirely, it would be immediately thereupon carried on by them, to a much greater degree, than it now is.—Perhaps that might be the consequence, and if it should, they must be answerable for that, the guilt and scandal would lie upon them. But if it were certain that this would be the case, this consideration cannot be a just reason for our continuing to carry on such a wicked trade. If we should not carry on this trade, others would, therefore we may, would be a strange way of reasoning.—But do you consider, Mr. Philmore, if all the blacks in our plantations were to be made freemen by the government,

government, what a great loss the planters in our colonies would suffer thereby, having purchased the slaves they have, at a great expence? I do Mr. Allcraft, and you should consider on the other hand, that liberty is the greatest blessing of life, and to some dearer than life, and likewise what misery those poor creatures suffer, while they are held in slavery, in comparison with which and the loss of their liberty the loss you speak of is but a trifle, not worth mentioning.—But as this slave-trade has been encouraged by the government for many reigns back, do not you think that the present government, in case they were to set those negroes in our colonies at liberty, should make good that loss to their masters?—I shall not take upon me, Mr. Allcraft, to determine that point: our governors are best judges of that. Only I think they had better do so, as you seem to think they should, though it should require some millions to do it, than suffer those poor creatures to continue in the miserable state of slavery they are now in.—Pray Sir, give me leave to suggest one consequence more, which in all likelihood would follow upon the prohibiting of the negro-trade, and that is, that such a prohibition would greatly

lessen, if not utterly ruin some other considerable branches of our commerce, especially the sugar and the tobacco-trade; for how or where could we get hands enough, in the room of the blacks, to work and labour in those plantations, where these commodities are produced?—Really Sir, I cannot answer your question, nor does it at all concern me to answer it; for I suppose you did not put it as an objection against what I have asserted, or in justification of the man-trade; for if this trade be in itself one continued scene of such cruelty and barbarity, as it hath been represented to be, it must be allowed, that it ought to be, strictly prohibited, let the consequences of such a prohibition be what they will, that none should be suffered to go on tormenting and murdering, their fellow-creatures, year after year, though we were never any more to see an ounce of tobacco or sugar in Great Britain. The inconveniences or worldly disadvantages arising from adhering to our duty, and acting according to the moral obligations we are under, let them be ever so great, are of no consideration at all in the eye of reason, nor can they have any weight with, or influence upon an honest virtuous mind, when set against these
obligations

obligations. And now, Mr. Allcraft, if you have any thing farther to say in favour or excuse of the man-trade, I am ready to hear it.—

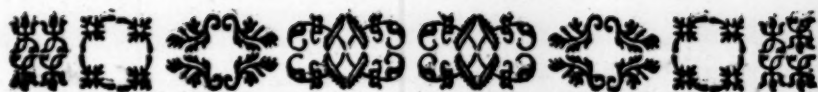
Sir, I cannot conceal my mind, nor pretend to stand it out with you any longer. I was fully convinced of the wickedness of this man-trade, before we parted yesterday evening; but as I wanted, to hear all that you had to say against it, I was willing to suggest what seemed any way plausible, or that I had heard others offer in defence of it, or rather indeed in excuse, or mitigation of the guilt of it. Though the love of money, and the pleasure of growing richer, and mending my fortune every year, as I have done for some years past, by this trade, did in a great measure corrupt my judgment, and prejudice my mind in favour of it, God forgive me, yet, as I hinted to you before, I had some scruples in my mind about it, I could never so fully satisfy myself of the lawfulness of it, but that I had at times some misgivings within, some risings in my stomach against it, which gave me no small uneasiness, for the time they lasted; but there, they were soon suppress'd by company,

pany, entertainments, and hurry of business. But now I hope, I shall never be so far abandoned and forsaken of God, as to have any thing to do in this man-trade for the future, after I have had such a horrid, shocking, and (as I now think) just representation of it set before me, and am fully convinced of the wickedness of it. No I am determined, as I promised to you before, never to have any farther concern in it, as long as I live: and I ask pardon of God and man for having ever engaged in it, as I am now sensible I have herein been guilty of an high offence against both; and, to make what atonement and amends I can, I will endeavour to convince those of my acquaintance, that are engaged in this trade, of the wickedness of it, and to persuade them to drop it entirely, and will lay aside some part of my annual income, to redeem some of the blacks, and set them at liberty.—Dear Mr. Allcraft, I am charm'd with what I have now heard from your mouth. I am very glad I have been able to convince you, and that you have taken up this good resolution. It would rejoice my heart, should I, by what I have said in the conversation we have had together, these two
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evenings, lessen the number of ships employed yearly in the man-trade, but by one, as I should thereby save fifty mens lives, or more, every year, and therefore, should do more good, and be more serviceable to mankind, than if I were to give ten thousand pounds to the hospitals in England.—I can assure you, Sir, you will prevent one ship's going to Guinea this year. And now you mention the hospitals, I am inclined to think, if one may judge by that good, generous, compassionate spirit, that has appeared among us of late years, and exerted itself in supplying the wants of the poor, and relieving the distressed, that if this affair of the man-trade were represented in a true light, if a plain state of the case were laid before the public, it would have a good effect, that it would make an impression upon the minds of some of those, who are concerned in it, and stir up many others, who are not, to do what they can to discountenance and suppress it, from the same humane, compassionate, disposition of soul.—Ay, I wish that were done, by some able pen, with life and spirit.—What do you think, Mr. Philmore, of publishing the conversation we have had upon this subject.

ject.—Why if I thought it would put such a pen upon writing on the same subject, I would have it published.—Well, if you will be at the trouble of writing it down, so far as your memory can serve you, I will send it to the press, and I wish you would add, as an appendix to it, an address to those who are concerned in the negro-trade.—I do not know what I may do. I will think of it.





T O T H E

Guinea-Merchants in England.

S I R S,

 S the business, you are concerned in,
 and carry on openly and publicly
 before the world, has a bad aspect,
 and you are sensible that most men make
 objections against it, and blame you for en-
 gaging in it, you are obliged to justify it to
 the world, upon the principles of reason,
 equity, and humanity, to make it appear that
 it is no unjust invasion of the persons, or in-
 croachment on the rights of men ; or for ever
 to lay it aside. And this is what every one,
 not only of your fellow-subjects, in England,
 but of your fellow-men, upon the face of the
 earth, who is no way concerned in the same
 business, has a right to insist upon, and de-
 mand from you, and ought, in a proper man-
 I ner,

ner, to resent it, if you will do neither the one nor the other.

But laying aside the resentment of man, which is but of little or no moment, in comparison with that of the Almighty, of the supreme lawgiver and judge of mankind, think of a future reckoning. Consider how you shall come off in the great and awful day of account. You now heap up riches, and live in pleasure. But oh! what will you do in the end thereof? And that is not far off. What if death should seize upon you, and hurry you out of this world, under all that load of blood-guiltiness, that now lies upon your souls. The gospel (I suppose I am now speaking to professed christians) expressly declares, that thieves, and murderers, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Consider that at the same time, and by the same means you now treasure up worldly riches, you are treasuring up to yourselves wrath, against the day of wrath and vengeance, that shall come upon the workers of iniquity, unless prevented by a timely repentance. And what greater iniquity, what crime that is more heinous that carries in it more complicated

plicated guilt, can you name, than that, in the habitual deliberate practice of which you now live. Good God! how can you, as some of you do, go to the sacrament of the Lord's-supper? How can you lift up your guilty eyes to heaven? How can you pray for mercy to him, that made you, or hope for any favour from him that formed you, while you go on thus grossly and openly to dishonour him, in debasing, abusing, and destroying the noblest workmanship of his hands, in this lower world.

He is the Father of men. And do you think he will not resent such treatment of his offspring, whom he hath so loved, as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life? This love of God to man, revealed in the gospel, is a great aggravation of your guilt: for if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. You remember the fate of the servant, who took hold of his fellow-servant, who was in his debt, by the throat, and cast him into prison. Think then, and tremble to think, what will be your fate, who take your fellow-servants by
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the throat, that owe you not a penny, and make them prisoners for life.

Give yourselves leave to reflect impartially upon, and consider the nature of this man-trade, which if you do, your hearts must needs relent, if you have not lost all sense of humanity, all pity and compassion towards those of your own kind, to think what calamities, what havock and destruction, among them, you have been the authors of, for filthy lucre's sake.

God grant you may be made sensible of your guilt, and repent in time. And as this is my hearty and earnest prayer to God, for you; I hope you will excuse the plainness and freedom of this address, in your sincere friend, who would be glad to do you any good, that lies in his power.

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